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COUNCIL ANNETTE ISLANDS RESERVE

METLAKATLA INDIAN COMMUNITY

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December 20, 2005

Alaska Department of Transportation
And Public Facilities
Attn: Commissioner Barton
6850 Glacier Highway
Juneau, Alaska 99801-7898
Fax: 907-465-8365

RE: STIP Comments

Dear Commissioner Barton,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft STIP for 2006-2008. In your Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan, as published in August 2004, we agree with your statements as published, "Your focus was on improving system efficiency and mobility in support of regional economy". During the past decade, the regional economy has been in a state of decline. Because transportation is the backbone of the regional economy, improvements in mobility and transport efficiency will be critical to promoting a strong and healthy economic climate in the future. You go on to say; the SATP goals have been structured to emphasize the need for a more efficient transportation system to foster economic growth.

The unemployment rate in Metlakatla is in the vicinity of 87% during the winter months. We are struggling to survive the winter months as a community and we will survive. Because of the high unemployment rate, many of our members have moved to different localities, searching for jobs to support their families.

We have been planning and constructing our Walden Point Road Project since the year 1996. This 14.7-mile road is presently under construction through the Military's Innovative Readiness Training Program. The Military construction crews arrive on Annette Island every year in April, commence construction and depart in October. This occurs every year, consequently our Walden Point Road is taking many years to complete. We are very thankful to the many agencies involved in construction of our road. When completed, the road will fulfill the goals and objectives as stated in your Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan.

In your 2004-2006 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program Amendment #8, our Terminal in Annette Bay was scheduled for construction in FFY06 with a project total of \$5,000,000. The Terminal in Saxman was listed for construction in FFY06, with a total construction cost of \$6,000,000.

Our Walden Point Road Construction completion was listed to be funded in FFY06 for a total \$18,000,000. Whereas, the original amount prior to the amendment was \$25,000,000, and Walden Point Road Replacement of Temporary Bridges was listed for funding in FFY06 for a total of \$4,000,000.

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We are requesting that all four of these projects and funding be reinserted into the new 2006-2008 STIP, with the amounts as follows:

Construct New Terminal at Annette Bay	\$5,300,000.
Walden Point Road Construction Completion	\$25,000,000.
Walden Point Road Replacement of Temporary Bridges .	\$4,000,000.
Saxman Terminal.....	\$7,500,000.

We are also requesting that these high priority projects be funded out of the recently approved SAFETEA-LU Highway Bill.

Our Walden Point Road is scheduled for completion in the year 2008 and will require funding for blacktop, guardrails and signage. Our request for \$10,000,000. for what we refer to as Phase "C" is included in the \$25,000,000., which is the portion of road from our present Ferry Terminal to the Chester Creek Waterfall. The Military will construct a pioneer road only, on this portion of the road. We are responsible for the final construction, to bring the road to grade and blacktopping of the road.

We requested an appropriation of \$10,000,000. to fund this portion of road from Senator Stevens. He inserted this amount into the appropriation bill, however, had it reduced to \$1,000,000, by Congress due to the high earmarks for the State of Alaska. Consequently, our request for the additional funding to successfully complete our road.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft STIP for 2006-2008.

Sincerely,
Mellakalla Indian Community


Victor C. Wellington, Mayor

cc: Andy Hughes fax: (907) 465-2016